

**MINUTES OF THE
NATURAL RESOURCES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Monday, February 8, 2010
Room 415, State Capitol Building, State Capitol Complex**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sen. Dennis Stowell, Co-Chair
Rep. Kerry W. Gibson, Co-Chair
Sen. Brent Goodfellow
Sen. David Hinkins
Rep. Roger Barrus
Rep. Jack Draxler
Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. John G. Mathis
Rep. Michael E. Noel
Rep. Christine Watkins
Rep. Bill Wright

STAFF: Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst
Linda Service, Committee Secretary

Note: A list of visitors and a copy of handouts are filed with the committee minutes.

Sen. Stowell called the meeting to order at 2:25 p.m.

Public Lands Office: Analyst Presentation

The Analyst discussed the "Public Lands Policy Coordination Office, Budget Brief." The agency is charged to oversee archeological survey and excavation permits, as well as to partner with state agencies and political subdivisions in an effort to prepare coordinated public lands policies, develop consistent reviews and responses to public lands policies, develop management plans that relate to public lands policies, develop and maintain a statewide land use plan. He briefly commented on the Accountability Detail and Budget Detail Table of the document.

Rep. Gibson assumed the Chair.

Agency Presentation

John Harja, Director, Public Lands Coordination Office, reviewed a slide presentation detailing the mission, goals and accomplishments, budget considerations and realities, and appropriation adjustment of the agency. In summary, he stated the Public Lands Coordination Office is the front line of negotiations on how the public land in Utah is accessed, protected and developed. Legislative support is critical to their mission. Changing federal policies makes it crucial they are actively engaged in public land issues and securing Utah's priorities.

Parks and Recreation: Analyst Presentation

The Analyst reviewed the document, "State Parks by Type and County" which shows the county location and activities that are available. In addition, he identified the funding mix for the parks operating budget, focusing on the fee collections at the parks (Fees Restricted). He grouped the parks into five major categories based on their primary functions.

The Analyst presented "Parks and Recreation Operations, Budget Brief". There are two requests for building blocks both of which impact restricted funds. The first, *OHV Registration Check-off Funds - for FY 2011*, the Division is requesting on-going appropriations of \$17,500 from the Off-highway Access and Education restricted account and \$4,000 from the Zion National Park Support Programs restricted account for protecting access to public lands and promoting off-highway vehicle education. The Analyst recommended the Legislature approve these requests. The second, *Redistribution of Restricted Funds* - the Division is requesting that the \$607,000 which the 2008 Legislature appropriated from the State Park Fees restricted account to offset some of the General Fund reductions for the Division, be distributed across all three restricted funds through: (1) reducing the appropriation to the State Park Fees restricted account by \$400,000, (2) increasing the appropriation to the Boating restricted account by \$200,000, and (3) increasing the appropriation to the Off-highway Vehicle restricted account by \$200,000. The sum total of these transactions is \$0. The Analyst recommended the Legislature approve the transfers.

The Analyst introduced the "Parks and Recreation Capital, Budget Brief". This line item provides capital funding for construction projects, as well as funding match for federal and local government dollars for capital acquisition and development. He outlined two requests for funding coming from the restricted accounts. The first, *Critical Maintenance and Repairs* - in order to address needs for capital maintenance, reconstruction, and repair due to postponed work from prior years, the Division is requesting for FY 2011 ongoing appropriations of \$200,000 from the State Park Fees restricted account, \$225,000 from the Off-highway Vehicle restricted account, and \$225,000 from the Boating restricted account. The Analyst recommended the Legislature fund these requests. Secondly, *Covered Storage Facilities* - after an in-depth financial analysis, the audit team of the Department of Natural Resources recommended the acquisition and operation of the covered storage at Jordanelle State Park. The Analyst recommended the Legislature provide a supplemental appropriation of \$440,000 from the State Park Fees restricted account for the purchase of the facilities. The Analyst noted the proposed intent language limiting the Division to \$440,000 for the purchase. In addition, new fees are proposed that will enable the Division to charge the users of that facility for dry storage and boat launch.

Agency Presentation

Mary Tullius, Director, Division of State Parks and Recreation, introduced Karl Bentley, Chairman of the Board of State Parks and Recreation, and Mark Forbes, Deputy Director over finance. Director Tullius gave a presentation highlighting the mission, services, customers, goals and major accomplishments of the Division. She addressed the 2010 budget cuts, focusing on efficiencies which have been put in place to lessen their impact. In summary, there are intangible and invaluable benefits within the state parks system. The state's collective heritage is continually being preserved through public landscapes. Director Tullius expressed her desire to keep parks accessible and affordable for this and future generations. She responded to questions from the members of the committee.

Sen. Buttars: Presentation on Parks

Sen. Buttars submitted a proposal to the committee which is an attempt to help cover revenue short falls with ongoing funds. He has compiled a ten-item list of suggested budget cuts, one of which is privatizing state parks. A discussion followed. Jamie Dalton, Planning Coordinator, State Parks, clarified questions regarding the economic benefit of state parks to the overall state budget.

MOTION: Rep. Draxler motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:12 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Sen. Dennis Stowell, Co-Chair

Rep. Kerry W. Gibson, Co-Chair

